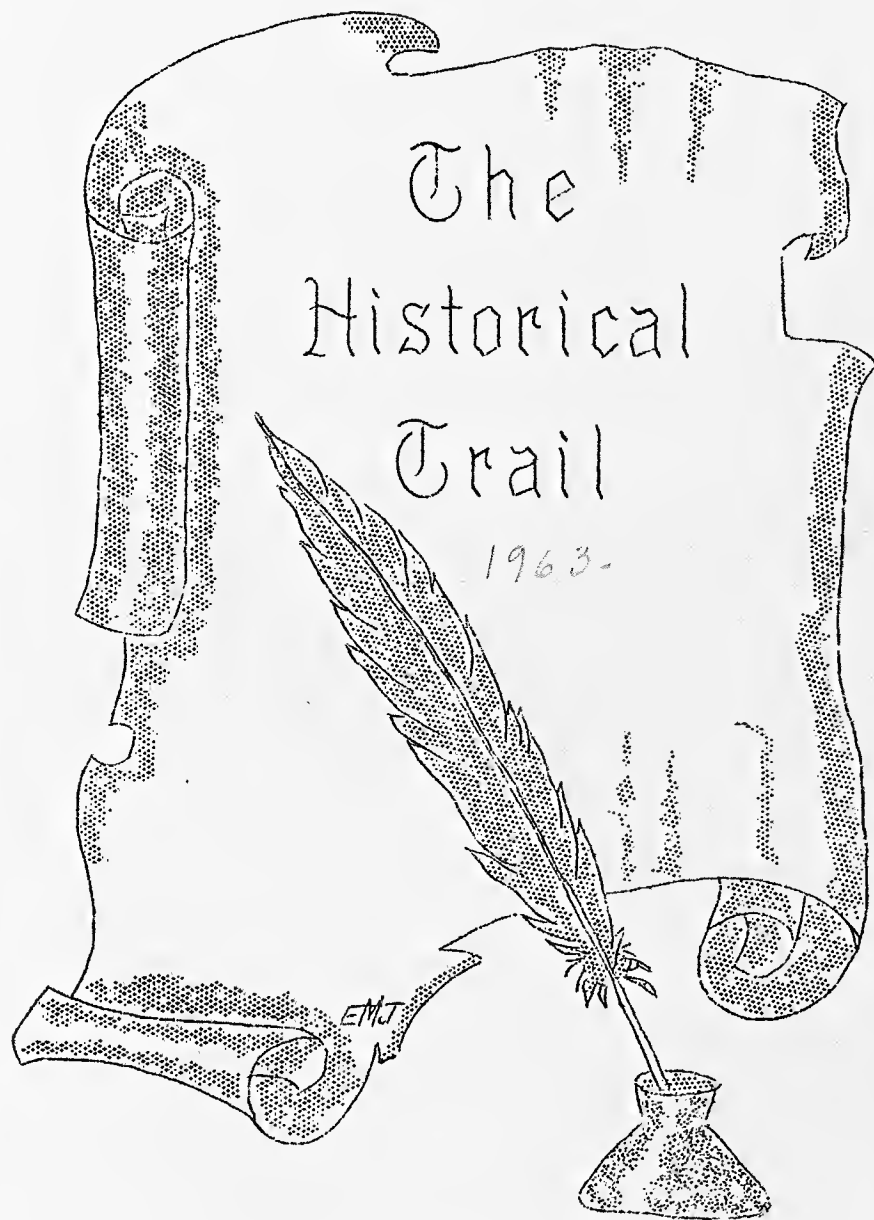


The Historical Trail

1963-



THE HISTORICAL TRAIL

Yearbook of the Historical Society of the
New Jersey Annual Conference of the
Methodist Church

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FORWARD

The idea of a brochure about historic Methodist data of interest to the New Jersey Conference was introduced at our Annual Conference in Ocean City last year. The first mimeographed pamphlet has met with many favorable comments.

At the business meeting of the Historical Society it was decided that this compiled information should be continued. Thus, we are mailing a copy to the members of the Historical Society. Additional copies will be available at Conference.

New Jersey was effectively influenced by our early Methodist preachers from England and the British Isles. On reaching America they preached their first sermons in this area. Many of these personalities are not known to the Methodist of this day.

In looking forward to the 1964 Conference the editor would greatly appreciate written articles of events, personalities, church and information concerning cemeteries forwarded to him.

We are not unmindful of the work that has been given in improving the physical appearance of some of our old church buildings and cemeteries.

We extend our thanks to Rev. Steelman and others who have contributed valuable information for this paper. "Thank you one and all."

(D. C. Evans)

BARRATT'S CHAPEL

A Shrine of Methodism

Barratt's Chapel, a shrine of Methodism, is located in Kent County, Delaware on Route 113 about two miles north of Fredericksa.

On October 12, 1730 there was born in Cecil County, Maryland a child named Philip Barratt. His father died soon thereafter. The mother remarried, her husband being a farmer from Kent County, Delaware.

Here young Philip grew to manhood and became a successful farmer. During 1755 he married Miriam, daughter of Waitman Sipple. Appointed Sheriff of Kent County in 1755 he served four years and was then elected to the Delaware Assembly.

The American Revolution had gripped the country. Few churches were open as the Episcopal rectors had fled to England for safety.

During this troubled period a few itinerant members of John Wesley's missionary movement continued preaching in homes, barns and in the open air.

Following a meeting in a private home Philip Barratt and his brother-in-law Johathan Sipple united with this movement during October 1778.

Realizing the need of a meeting place Philip Barratt and his father-in-law determined to do something about it.

On March 20, 1780 Francis Asbury entered in his Journal the following: "Went home with Waitman Sipple, he and Philip Barratt determined to go about the Chapel and to place it near the drawbridge".

The drawbridge was over the Murderkill River. The site selected was ground belonging to Philip Barratt. The building they erected was of brick, two stories in

height, forty two feet in front and forty eight feet in length. It had a high pulpit and a balcony extending around three sides. On crude benches there was room for three hundred worshippers.

The building begun in March, was completed or at least sufficiently so, to be usable in August 1780.

On August 17, 1780 Philip Barratt deeded the property to nine trustees. The deed provided that those entitled to preach therein shall be appointed at the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, held in America to preach and expound God's word, and no other doctrine shall be taught than is contained in the Rev. John Wesley's notes on the New Testament and four volumes of sermons.

The Revolution being over and the Bishops of the Church of England having failed to act after being requested by Mr. Wesley, he as a Presbyterian of the Church of England, believed he had a right to ordain ministers. Accordingly on September 2, 1784 he ordained Dr. Thomas Coke as a Superintendent and Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as Elders in a church which was not yet organized.

The three men sailed for America immediately. Arriving at New York they travelled to Delaware seeking Francis Asbury.

Sunday morning, November 14, 1784 they arrived at Barratt's Chapel. On that day a Quarterly meeting was being held there and many were present. Ascending the high pulpit, Dr. Coke preached, his topic being "Christ, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption".

Following the sermon Dr. Coke, assisted by Richard Whatcoat, served the Holy Communion. This was the first time it had ever been served in America by

Methodists ordained for that purpose. This alone makes Barratt's Chapel notable in Methodist history.

During the service Francis Asbury arrived. Not knowing of the ordination in England, nor of Mr. Wesley's plan for himself, he was disturbed but noted, "it may be of God".

Philip Barratt who had provided the setting for this historic meeting was not present. Just 17 days previously he had been called to his eternal reward and was sleeping in the cemetery adjoining the Chapel.

Following the morning services Francis Asbury, Dr. Coke and ten other ministers were entertained for dinner by Miriam Sipple Barratt at the homestead.

That same afternoon in the home of the widow of Philip Barratt, the plans were laid to call the Christmas Conference of 1784 at Baltimore. At this Conference the Methodist Episcopal Church was born.

Truly Barratt's Chapel is a shrine of Methodism. Now one hundred eighty-three years old it should be visited by every Methodist. They should examine the crude pews; sit on the same bench on which Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury sat that day and then wander through the cemetery seeking the plain marble slab which marks the resting place of one whom Francis Asbury afterward called "That holy man of God, Philip Barratt".

(Clark S. Barratt)

(A condensation of an Address delivered before the Historical Society of the New Jersey Annual Conference of The Methodist Church by Clark S. Barratt at the Annual Meeting of the Society held October 21, 1961 at the Willow Grove Methodist Church.)

JOHN EARLY: PIONEER METHODIST IN NEW JERSEY

The Methodist Trail in New Jersey, according to reliable and authoritative sources, backed by family tradition, originated in the home of JOHN EARLY: born in Ireland 1738; immigrated to America 1764, and settled in Greenwich Township, Old Gloucester County; in what was known as the "Irish Tenth," which comprised the present counties of Gloucester, Camden and Atlantic.

A member of the family now living in Ireland states the above mentioned John Early was an aggressive and prosperous business man, in partnership with a brother in the wood-working trade. Coming under the influence of John Wesley during one of his trips to Ireland, Early embraced the doctrines of the Wesleyan Church. He was disowned by his family, and fearing the brother might also be influenced, they persuaded John to go to America.

He bought acreage along "Still Run Creek" in Greenwich Township; later 2/3 interest (afterwards remaining 1/3) in a sawmill. His home, a log cabin, located about one mile Northeast of the present Aura Methodist Church, was later incorporated in a larger house which burned about 1911.

John Early, together with the old line Methodist Class Leaders and Preachers, was a fearless and rugged individualist.

The flame ignited at "Early" was exceedingly small and feeble. A Methodist in those days was a rare phenomenon; persecuted, misunderstood and oftentimes considered "Tories", although John Early served his adopted country during the Revolutionary War. The operation of his sawmill gave him an opportunity to meet people from near and afar, and apparently he lost

no opportunity to expound the doctrines of Methodism. He applied his business talent organizing Classes and Societies throughout Old Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland Counties. On the arrival of Francis Asbury in 1771, these Societies and Classes were incorporated as churches under the laws of New Jersey.

To what extent the Society had increased, or the date of leaving "Early" cannot be ascertained. Rev. Jacob Fisler speaks of going to Quarterly Meetings 10 to 50 miles. He further stated: "our practice was to work till 10 o'clock, take our horses or oxen from the plow, hitch to the wagon and all hands go to John Early to meeting. At 12 o'clock, turn teams to wagons, let them eat, while we went to hear a good sermon; have a powerful class; then hitch up again and go home rejoicing. On Sundays go to Father Early again. Some week day nights we went to John Early, Samuel Ledden or Joseph Jackson for prayer meeting."

At the incorporation of Bethel, Adams Meeting House, Friendship and Aura Churches; possible others, John Early was named on deeds as trustee. They took their religion seriously, often signing the oath of office before a notary with their own blood. When the Missionary Society of Bethel was organized, March 14, 1824, John Early was the first named manager, together with 14 others.

Previous to the erection of the Union Meeting House, Aura, begun in 1802, Early was the regular Sunday afternoon preaching place on the Bethel Circuit, according to Rev. Richard Sneath, who served that circuit in 1790.

Bishop Asbury states, April 14, 1807: "rode to Salem and preached; rode home with Father Early". April 9, 1809, preached at Carpenter Bridge, "we lodged with Father Early, 24 miles from the city. Here I take a little rest." John Early maintained in his home a room known as "the preacher's room".

William Early, born October 17, 1770, the oldest son of John Early, was converted at a revival in Friendship Church in 1789 at the age of 19. He entered the ministry at age 21, in 1791. He bore the cross into the wilds of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In 1794 while on the Chester Circuit, he married Miss Hoffman. Later he served Circuits in Delaware and Maryland. He died June 21, 1821 at Newark, Delaware. Other members of the family have answered the "call to preach".

Sons and grandsons of John Early migrated to the Philadelphia area, and were affiliated with Old Ebenezer Methodist Church. One grandson, Edward Stokes Early, became an undertaker catering to wealthy families. They were apparently in close touch with the Methodist organization because through the influence of Bishop Matthew Simpson, young Early was placed in charge of the funeral of President Abraham Lincoln. He later officiated at the funerals of Bishop Simpson, President Grant and other prominent people.

John Early died at the homestead, near Aura, New Jersey, January 20, 1828. The "Village Herald and Advertiser" in reporting his death states in part: "He had been an exemplary member of the Methodist Episcopal Church for sixty years". While the Christian Advocate states: "He was a Class Leader and Steward for forty years...." "As a Christian, brother Early was consistent - as a friend, faithful - as a neighbor, obliging - as a husband, kind and indulgent - as a parent, fond and careful of those committed to his care - sixty years of his useful life were spent in the services of his Heavenly Master - and he now rests from his labours." His first wife, Mary, died March 16, 1801; and his second wife, Hannah, died April 20, 1828. They are buried in Bethel Cemetery, Hurffville, New Jersey.

(Charles Earley)

LAY ACTIVITIES IN THE NEW JERSEY CONFERENCE
(Continued from Vol. 1, No. 1)

After the New Jersey Conference of 1870 had debated the question of Lay Representation to the General Conference for four days, it was finally passed. Enough Conferences ratified it so the General Conference of 1872 seated the first Lay Delegates to that body - two from each Annual Conference.

The first Lay Electoral Conference in the New Jersey Conference was held in 1872. In the resolution of acceptance of the Lay Conference was the following: "Resolved: That the expression of warm fraternal regards and of sincere devotions to the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom, which we find embodied in those resolutions, are worthy of the highest appreciation, and that we hail with gladness the indications of advantage promised by a closer association between laymen and ministers in the various enterprises and responsibilities of the Church". (Resolution signed by Rev. George Brown and S. (Samuel) Van Sant).

The Conference's most perplexing problem at this time was the Seminary at Vineland.

The second Lay Electoral Conference met with the Annual Conference in Mount Holly in 1876. The meeting was called to order by Jesse H. Diverty, Secretary of the last Conference. Religious exercises were conducted by Prof. George D. Horner. Thomas MacPherson was elected chairman and James S. Yard, Secretary, with Thomas Middleton as assistant. In the afternoon devotional exercises were led by John McMurren. Delegates elected to the General Conference were W.H. Bodine and C. E. Hendrickson with W. S. Yard and G. D. Horner as alternates. The Benediction was by E. Knowles.

At the 1888 General Conference a long debate ensued on the eligibility of women as lay delegates to

General Conference. The following Conferences had sent women as delegates:

Kansas	-	Amada C. Rippey
Minnesota	-	Mary C. Nind
Nebraska	-	Angie F. Newman
Pittsburg	-	Lizzie D. Van Kirk
Rock River	-	Frances E. Willard

The question of their eligibility was submitted to a committee, which reported adversely to their admission. The report was adopted 237 to 198.

The General Conference ordered the question to be submitted to the lay members of the Church (throughout Methodism) for the expression of opinion by vote for or against the admission of women, the vote to be taken by ballot during the months of October or November, 1890. The same was also to be submitted to the Annual Conferences in 1891.

The vote of the entire membership was: for, 235,668; against 163,843. But to change the Restrictive Rule to give the women a seat in General Conference, the vote in the Annual Conferences was for, 5,634; against, 4,717. This lacked the 3/4 majority and did not pass.

In the 1888 Annual Conference Memorial to the General Conference concerning the licensing of women to preach and their ordination as ministers was amended in Foreign Missionary Work and adopted by a vote of 79 to 63.

At the session of the Lay Electoral Conference the same year, William H. Bodine was elected Chairman and Jacob F. Stanger, Secretary. Gen. C. B. Fisk, J. P. Harker and B. F. Archer spoke to the Conference on behalf of the laymen.

(Walter B. VanSant)

BISHOP ASBURY'S 1785 TOUR OF THE JERSEYS

In September of 1785, Francis Asbury, Bishop of the newly organized M. E. Church, made his first episcopal tour of the Shore and River Counties of New Jersey. The state had been divided in 1781 into the East and West Jersey Circuits. In 1785 William Phoebus, Thomas Ware and Robert Sparks were appointed to the West Jersey Circuit with Thomas S. Chew as Presiding Elder.

The Tour of 1785 started in New York on September 7th. He crossed the New York and Newark Bays by ferry at Poweles Hook. Missing the stage he walked 6 miles to Newark where he "dined with Mr. Ogden". Rev. Ogden was the rector of the Episcoapl Church and a good friend of the Methodists. Later he joined the Presbyterians.

After preaching in a Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, Asbury on September 9th rode into Monmouth County by the old road to Tennent's Meeting House. Here he "heard Mr. Woodhull preach a funeral discourse". Rev. John Woodhull, DD succeeded William Tennent as minister of the Presbyterian Church.

From Tennents Meeting House, Asbury rode the next day the 7 odd miles to the Church at Monmouth, now Adelphia. Job Throckmorton was perhaps the first Methodist convert in this area. He was converted in 1780 by the Rev. Richard Garrettson in a barn still standing on the farm of James Hendrickson, just off route 9 a little north of Adelphia.

The next entry in the Journal by Asbury is one week later. He attended a "Quarterly Meeting at Morris River" where Benjamin Abbott and Simon Lucas also preached. This was at Port Elizabeth. Asbury had ridden some 75 miles from Adelphia, along the coast through three counties in some seven days.

There was by this time Methodist preaching at Waretown, Goodluck (Potter's Meeting House), Squire Akins in Toms River, Tuckerton and at the Forks of the Little Egg Harbor in the Pleasant Mills - Batsto area. These were on the probable route of Asbury, yet he makes no mention of having stopped at any one of them. The time he took to ride the 75 odd miles in seven days would indicate that he tarried on the way. He generally made some 20 or 30 miles a day, if he was on horse back. On the next trip along the coast in 1786 he visited several of these stations.

While at Port Elizabeth Asbury purchased a "Jersey Wagon" from Daniel Fisler for 44 pounds (less than \$200). The Philadelphia Conference had donated the money for this. The vehicle was a box-like black covered wagon, much like the market wagon in use in South Jersey some 50 years ago. Asbury used the wagon only until October 6th. While travelling in Maryland he makes the following entry in his Journal, "I found the means of conveyance by carriage or "Jersey Wagon" would not do".

After spending several days at Port Elizabeth Asbury preached at Stow Creek. Stow Creek is the boundary line of Cumberland and Salem Counties. The exact preaching place cannot be identified. It may have been at Logstown (Harmersville).

Asbury next preached in Salem. Methodism in Salem was started by Benjamin Abbott. A frame meeting house, hardly more than a barn, was erected in the late years of the Revolution.

"From Salem we proceeded on the 30 miles through a great storm: we were glad to stop at Gloucester". He does not mention preaching here, just spent some time before going on to Philadelphia.

(Joseph Henry Bennett)

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RBS:emj